

Docket Item # 6
BAR CASE # 2006-0298

BAR Meeting
January 24, 2007

ISSUE: After-the-fact demolition
APPLICANT: Nicole Byrd
LOCATION: 414 North Patrick Street
ZONE: RB/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application as submitted.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by the Code Enforcement Bureau (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Enforcement, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

(Insert sketch here)

NOTE: This docket item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of an after-the-fact permit to demolish for removal of the roof at 414 North Patrick Street. BAR Staff reviewed and approved a permit for interior work at 414 North Patrick Street on May 3, 2006 (BLD2006-02042). At that time, Staff marked the permit plans to make clear that the approval was for interior work only and discussed with the permit applicant that any exterior work would require review by the BAR. On November 15, 2006, BAR Staff received a revision to the permit for new roof framing. Upon inspection, it became clear that the roof and roof framing had been removed from the two story brick house and its reconstruction was nearly complete. In addition, the site inspection revealed other items of exterior work, including new doors and windows. At that time, the applicant was advised to apply to the BAR for all exterior work.

According to the applicant, the roof removal was the only demolition or capsulation for this project. The applicant explained that the roof structure was too deteriorated to retain. The entire house appears to have been gutted, with all ceiling floor and roof systems removed to the brick shell.

The house fronts on Patrick Street and is visible from the alley at the rear. The flat roof is not visible from any public right of way.

II. HISTORY:

Based on historic mapping, the semi-detached house at 414 North Patrick Street appears to have been constructed between 1877 and 1891. The two story brick house has a flat roof. A simple shed roofed porch shelters the front door. Queen Anne style influences can be seen in the two story square bay and decorative brickwork on the front facade, including specialty bricks at the window lintels, panels of decorative pressed bricks, a corbelled cornice and chamfered corners on the bay. Staff could not locate any record of prior BAR reviews for this property.

III. ANALYSIS:

In considering a Permit to Demolish or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec. 10-205(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that it's moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating

citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

(6) Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

Staff does not believe any of the above criteria are met by the removal of the roof. The flat roof was not readily visible and, beyond being flat, is not a character defining feature of the property. On the other hand, Staff notes that historic preservation principles clearly call for the retention of all historic fabric, including structural elements that are readily visible, to the greatest extent possible. The loss of historic fabric affects the historic integrity of the property. In other recent cases, Staff has noted the detrimental effects of removal of roof structure: 1018 Queen Street and 326 North Patrick Street. Certainly, there will be cases in which repairing the deteriorated historic members will not be a satisfactory solution. Unfortunately, in this case, Staff was not afforded an opportunity to assess the extent of deterioration and necessity of wholesale removal of the historic fabric prior to the demolition.

To conclude, Staff finds the wholesale removal of historic roof is regrettable, but does not believe it rises to the level of the above criteria.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the permit to demolish as submitted.

CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Enforcement:

F-1 Applicant has provided insufficient information as to the nature and extent of renovations and demolition. Applicant shall submit detailed information describing the renovations and demolition performed.

Historic Alexandria:

The nature of these after-the-fact alterations is not clear. Not enough information is provided.